



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2022-0288; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00913-G; Amendment 39-22119; AD 2022-14-14]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau Gliders

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau Model ASW-15 gliders. This AD results from mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) originated by an aviation authority of another country to identify and correct an unsafe condition on an aviation product. The MCAI identifies the unsafe condition as wing root damage. This AD requires repetitively inspecting the wing root ribs for cracks, looseness, and damage and replacing any root rib with a crack, a loose rib or lift pin bushing, or any damage. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in this AD as of [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: For service information identified in this final rule, contact Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau, Alexander-Schleicher-Str. 1, Poppenhausen, Germany D-36163; phone: +49 (0) 06658 89-0; email: info@alexander-schleicher.de; website: <https://www.alexander-schleicher.de>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 901 Locust, Kansas City, MO 64106. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA,

call (817) 222-5110. It is also available at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0288.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0288; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this final rule, the MCAI, any comments received, and other information. The address for Docket Operations is U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jim Rutherford, Aviation Safety Engineer, General Aviation & Rotorcraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 901 Locust, Room 301, Kansas City, MO 64106; phone: (816) 329-4165; email: jim.rutherford@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to all Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau Model ASW-15 gliders. The NPRM published in the *Federal Register* on March 23, 2022 (87 FR 16433). The NPRM was prompted by MCAI from the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union. EASA issued AD 2021-0187, dated August 9, 2021 (referred to after this as “the MCAI”), to address an unsafe condition on all Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau Model ASW 15 gliders. The MCAI states:

Occurrences were reported of finding wing root rib damage. Investigation is ongoing to determine the root cause of the damage.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could reduce the structural integrity of the wing assembly of the sailplane.

To address this potential unsafe condition, Schleicher issued the TN [technical note] to provide inspection instructions.

For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD requires repetitive inspections of each affected part and, depending on findings, replacement. This [EASA] AD also introduces restrictions for installation of an affected part.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0288.

In the NPRM, the FAA proposed to require repetitively inspecting the wing root ribs for cracks, looseness, and damage and replacing any root rib with a crack, a loose rib or lift pin bushing, or any damage. The FAA is issuing this AD to detect and correct damaged root ribs. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in reduced structural integrity of the wing assembly, which could lead to loss of control of the glider.

Discussion of Final Airworthiness Directive

Comments

The FAA received one comment from an individual. The following presents the comment received on the NPRM and the FAA's response to the comment.

An individual requested the FAA revise the proposed applicability from "all serial numbers" to "serial numbers 15001 up to 15183," as stated in the Alexander Schleicher TN. The commenter stated that serial numbers 15184 and subsequent should not be subject to the proposed AD as the wing rib design changed at serial number 15184. The commenter further stated that if the FAA does not change the proposed applicability, owners of gliders with redesigned wing ribs would be required to do needless inspections.

The FAA does not agree that the requested change is necessary. Type Certificate Data Sheet No. G22EU identifies Model ASW-15 gliders as those with serial numbers 15001 through 15183 and Model ASW-15B gliders as those with serial numbers 15184 and subsequent. Therefore, this AD applies to Model ASW-15 gliders, all serial numbers, certificated in any category, which includes only serial numbers 15001 through 15183 inclusive.

The FAA did not change this AD based on this comment.

Conclusion

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with this State of Design Authority, it has notified the FAA of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI and service information referenced above. The FAA reviewed the relevant data, considered the comment received, and determined that air safety requires adopting this AD as proposed. Accordingly, the FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on this product. This AD is adopted as proposed in the NPRM.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR Part 51

The FAA reviewed Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau ASW 15 Technical Note No. 29, dated June 28, 2021. This service information specifies inspecting the root ribs at the wings.

The FAA also reviewed Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau ASW 15 Repair instruction exchange of wing root ribs according to TN 29, dated June 28, 2021. This service information specifies procedures for replacing the root ribs.

In addition, the FAA reviewed Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau ASW 15 Maintenance Instruction G, Issue 1, dated June 28, 2021. This service information specifies procedures for inspecting the root ribs at the wings for damage.

This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 20 gliders of U.S. registry.

The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD:

Estimated costs

| Action | Labor Cost | Parts Cost | Cost per glider | Cost on U.S. operators |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Inspect root ribs | 1 work-hour x \$85 per hour = \$85 | Not Applicable | \$85 | \$1,700 |

The FAA estimates the following costs to do any necessary replacements that would be required based on the results of the inspection. The agency has no way of determining the number of gliders that might need these replacements:

On-condition costs

| Action | Labor Cost | Parts Cost | Cost per glider |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Replace all four root ribs | 8 work-hours x \$85 per hour = \$680 | \$1,000 | \$1,680 |

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

This AD will not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This AD will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this AD:

- (1) Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA amends 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

2022-14-14 Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau: Amendment 39-22119; Docket No. FAA-2022-0288; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00913-G.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau Model ASW-15 gliders, all serial numbers, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 5712, Wing, Rib/Bulkhead.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) originated by an aviation authority of another country to identify and correct an unsafe condition on an aviation product. The MCAI describes the unsafe condition as wing root rib damage. The FAA is issuing this AD to detect and correct damaged root ribs. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in reduced structural integrity of the wing assembly, which could lead to loss of control of the glider.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Action

(1) Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 12 months, inspect all wing root ribs (4 places) for cracks, looseness, and damage, in accordance with the Action section in Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau ASW 15 Maintenance Instruction G, Issue 1, dated June 28, 2021. If there is a crack in any root rib, a loose rib or lift pin bushing, or any damage, before further flight, replace the root rib in accordance with Action paragraph (B) in Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau ASW 15 Technical Note No. 29, dated June 28, 2021, and steps 1 through 7 in Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau ASW 15 Repair instruction exchange of wing root ribs according to TN 29, dated June 28, 2021.

(2) Replacing all four wing root ribs is terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by this AD.

(h) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the certification office, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (i)(1) of this AD and email to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(i) Related Information

(1) For more information about this AD, contact Jim Rutherford, Aviation Safety Engineer, General Aviation & Rotorcraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 901 Locust, Room 301, Kansas City, MO 64106; phone: (816) 329-4165; email: jim.rutherford@faa.gov.

(2) Refer to European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2021-0187, dated August 9, 2021, for more information. You may view the EASA AD at <https://www.regulations.gov> in Docket No. FAA-2022-0288.

(j) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of the service information listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this service information as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless the AD specifies otherwise.

(i) Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau ASW 15 Maintenance Instruction G, Issue 1, dated June 28, 2021.

(ii) Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau ASW 15 Repair instruction exchange of wing root ribs according to TN 29, dated June 28, 2021.

(iii) Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau ASW 15 Technical Note No. 29, dated June 28, 2021.

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau, Alexander-Schleicher-Str. 1, Poppenhausen, Germany D-36163; phone: +49 (0) 06658 89-0; email: info@alexander-schleicher.de; website: <https://www.alexander-schleicher.de>.

(4) You may view this service information at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 901 Locust, Kansas City, MO 64106. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110.

(5) You may view this service information that is incorporated by reference at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, email: fr.inspection@nara.gov, or go to:

<https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued on July 1, 2022.

Christina Underwood, Acting Director,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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